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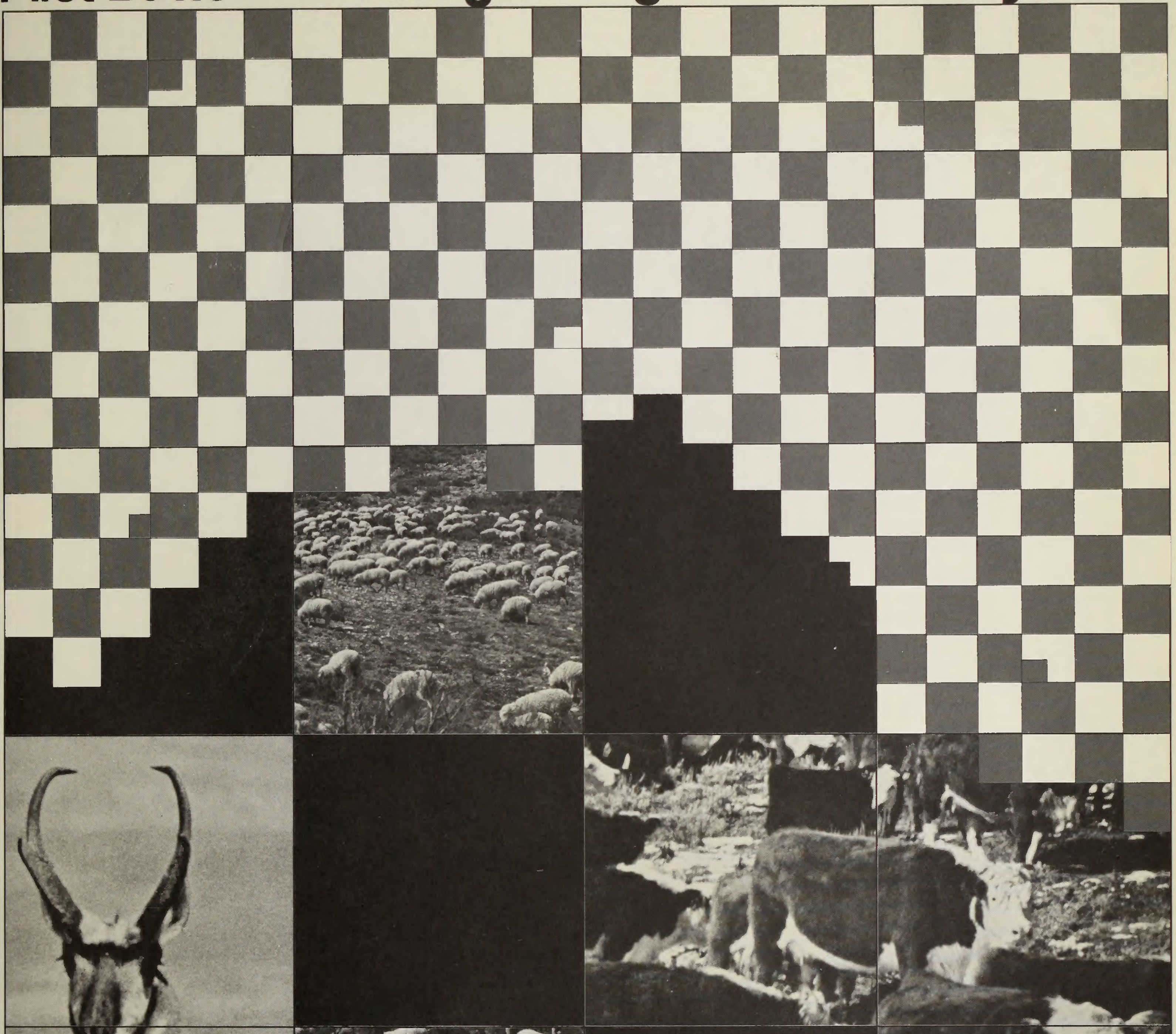

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RECORD OF DECISION AND RANGELAND PROGRAM SUMMARY FOR THE SALT WELLS-PILOT BUTTE GRAZING ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
ROCK SPRINGS DISTRICT
SALT WELLS/BIG SANDY RESOURCE AREAS

FEBRUARY 1984

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ABSTRACT

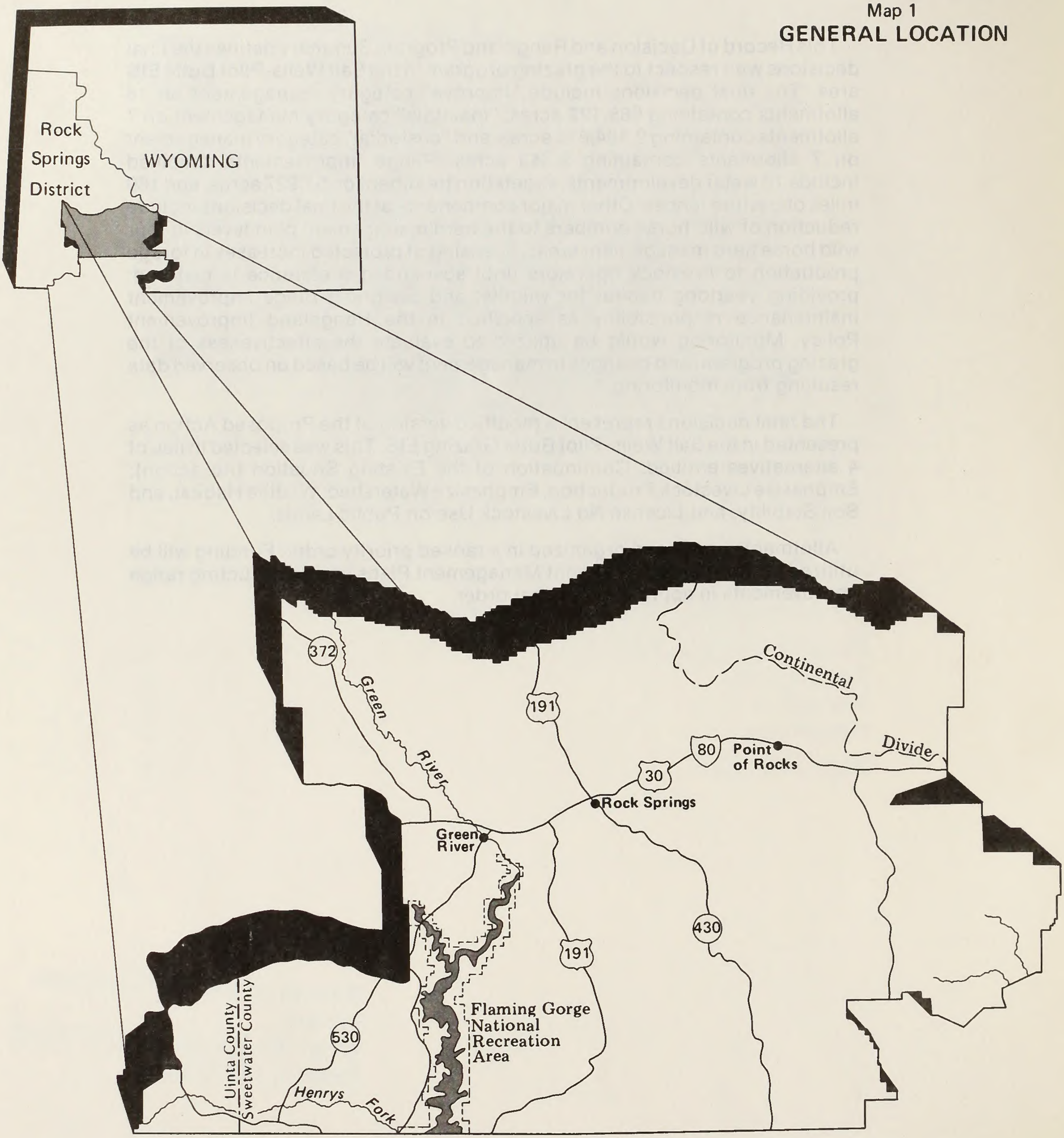
This Record of Decision and Rangeland Program Summary defines the final decisions with respect to the grazing program in the Salt Wells-Pilot Butte EIS area. The final decisions include "improve" category management on 16 allotments containing 988,123 acres, "maintain" category management on 7 allotments containing 2,184,816 acres, and "custodial" category management on 7 allotments containing 9,343 acres. Range improvements specified include 70 water developments, vegetation treatment on 51,927 acres, and 160 miles of pasture fences. Other major components of the final decisions include reduction of wild horse numbers to the herd management plan levels in four wild horse herd management areas; licensing of projected increases in forage production to livestock operators until suspended preference is restored; providing yearlong habitat for wildlife; and assigning range improvement maintenance responsibility as specified in the Rangeland Improvement Policy. Monitoring would be utilized to evaluate the effectiveness of the grazing program, and changes in management will be based on observed data resulting from monitoring.

The final decisions represent a modified version of the Proposed Action as presented in the Salt Wells-Pilot Butte Grazing EIS. This was selected in lieu of 4 alternatives entitled: Continuation of the Existing Situation (no action); Emphasize Livestock Production; Emphasize Watershed, Wildlife Habitat, and Soil Stability; and License No Livestock Use on Public Lands.

Allotments have been organized in a ranked priority order. Funding will be utilized for developing Allotment Management Plans and constructing range improvements in approximately that order.

Map 1

GENERAL LOCATION



INTRODUCTION

Background-Purpose

This Record of Decision and associated Rangeland Program Summary is designed to inform the reader as to the course of action the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) intends to take with respect to grazing management in the Salt Wells-Pilot Butte Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Area. This document is the culmination of the Bureau's land use planning and environmental analysis process pertinent to the rangeland management program. The land use planning process originated with a description of the area's existing natural resources and their potential for management. This was followed by the development of a recommended comprehensive multiple-use management plan. The Salt Wells-Pilot Butte EIS then analyzed the recommended management plan as the proposed action (which was identified as the preferred alternative), as well as alternatives developed from the initial single-use oriented recommendations made by specialists for the various programs (i.e. range, lands, minerals, forestry, watershed, wildlife and recreation).

Area Covered

The Salt Wells Resource Area and the Pilot Butte portion of the Big Sandy Resource Area encompass approximately 3,294,355 acres located in southwest Wyoming. The vast majority of the acreage is contained within Sweetwater County. A small amount of the land is within Uinta County. Map 1 shows the overall location within the State of Wyoming.

The Salt Wells-Pilot Butte area is entirely within the Rock Springs District of the BLM. Ownership includes public land administered by the Bureau of Land Management (1,863,653 acres); other Federal land (134,327 acres); State of Wyoming lands (92,359 acres); and lands owned by various private individuals or organizations (1,091,943 acres). Some lands (112,073 acres) within the area's boundary are not utilized for grazing, or are not used in conjunction with public land.

The land pattern is characterized by "checkerboard" and solid block ownership. Approximately two-thirds of the area is checkerboard, a land pattern in which private landowners generally control the odd-numbered sections and the BLM administers the even numbered sections. Exceptions to this include homesteaded lands and State holdings. The alternating land pattern, when depicted on a map, resembles a checkerboard. One-third of the area is solid block lands, which are predominantly federally owned with small tracts of private and State lands scattered throughout the solid block.

Resources of the Area

The resources managed by the Bureau are described in the Draft EIS. In addition to the 324,650 AUMs of livestock grazing capacity, the area is rich in wildlife habitat, recreation opportunities, wild horses, minerals, and cultural resources. Included within the area are the communities of Rock Springs, Green River, Superior, Reliance, Point of Rocks, McKinnon, Burntfork, and Lonetree. The people of the area use the local natural resources for their livelihood and recreation. As a result, most land use decisions are analyzed by the public from divergent viewpoints.

Management Objectives

The overall objectives for the management of rangeland resources are summarized below. These seven objectives are taken from the national range policy, but are considered appropriate for this EIS area:

1. Authorize livestock grazing of public rangelands under the principles of multiple use and sustained yield;
2. Protect, maintain, and improve the rangeland resources through sound land use and grazing management decisions;
3. Conduct the level of soil and vegetation inventories necessary to support management decisions and provide a baseline for monitoring programs;
4. Increase and encourage systematic cooperation, consultation, and coordination with rangeland users and owners of intermingled land as part of the land use and grazing management decision-making process;
5. Determine appropriate stocking levels (including proper season and area of use) based on the best available information, and authorize livestock grazing consistent with those stocking levels;

6. Initiate cost-effective rangeland improvements that will help improve the condition of the lands for livestock grazing, wildlife habitat, wild horses and burros, and watershed protection, etc.; and
7. Monitor rangeland resources and livestock use to assist in determining proper stocking levels and measure progress toward achieving management objectives.

Areas of Concern and Controversy

During the scoping process of the EIS, the following six issues were identified:

1. Management of riparian bottomlands.
2. Gully headcutting of drainages.
3. Maintaining wildlife habitat.
4. Maintaining the economic base for the local livestock industry.
5. Wild horse management.
6. The effects of livestock grazing on soils, watershed, vegetation, recreation, cultural, visual, and wilderness resources.

While there is apparent agreement as to the areas of controversy, the methodology of management is somewhat controversial. During the comment period of the draft EIS, wildlife groups objected to management of livestock via fencing. Fencing debates often included a discussion of future fence location. Some argue that fences should only be used in the form of riparian exclosures. Other individuals indicated that they believe the existing situation was satisfactory and little or no changes are needed.

Proper use of riparian and important winter forage species (for both livestock and wildlife) is considered the key to successful range management in the area. Both local public opinion and inventory data indicate that upland or total forage appears to be sufficient to sustain existing livestock numbers and maintain quality wildlife habitat. It is the tendency of cattle to concentrate in warm weather on limited riparian habitat, which appears to be the major environmental concern with respect to livestock use in the area. Gardner saltbush and mountain shrub communities are also considered key management areas for grazing animals, due to the late season protein levels they contain. These plant communities are the most important winter forage for livestock and wildlife.

The consultation and coordination process seems to have successfully reduced controversy concerning the wild horse issue. General satisfaction with the wild horse herd management area plans, including management numbers, has been expressed by the public. The BLM recognizes the need to reduce these animals to management numbers and implement the plans as soon as possible.

Public Involvement

Public input on grazing decisions has been sought since the begining of the planning process. Formal input was sought concerning the recommended multiple-use management plan, the Draft EIS, and the Final EIS. Informal discussions with permittees and other interested individuals has been occurring on a regular basis.

While the expressed purpose of this document is to issue final decisions, input from members of the public will continue to be solicited in implementing the decisions contained within the RPS. The Bureau will coordinate with livestock permittees and the Wyoming Department of Game and Fish in the development of AMPs, to ensure proper design and location of range improvements. The Area Managers and the range staffs of both the Big Sandy and Salt Wells Resource Areas are available to discuss the development of AMPs scheduled for development. Interested individuals may keep informed as to the progress of the range program by consulting the RPS updates which will be issued periodically or by contacting the Big Sandy and Salt Wells Resource Area Offices. The RPS updates will more clearly specify the type and location of range improvements.

REVIEW OF THE SALT WELLS-PILOT BUTTE EIS

The EIS analyzed the environmental (and Socioeconomic) impacts of five alternatives including the Proposed Action. Complete descriptions of these alternatives can be found in the Draft EIS. Limited numbers of either the Draft or Final EIS document are available at the District or Resource Area Offices upon request. The following is a summary of each alternative.

Proposed Action

Utilize the selective management categorization process to group allotments into Improve (I), Maintain (M), or Custodial (C) status. An analysis of the criteria used on categorizing allotments is displayed on page 6 of the Draft EIS. Table 1 of this document shows each allotment contained in the EIS area by category.

Management of Improve ("I") Category Allotments

1. Develop range improvements as specified in Table 2 of this document, subject to the mitigation measures in the EIS and planning system.
2. Utilize condition and trend information gathered through monitoring by the provisions of Appendix C of the Draft EIS to make decisions concerning changes in livestock grazing use. Continue existing stocking rates and season of use until monitoring results indicate a change would be appropriate. Existing grazing preference for the allotments covered (I, M, and C) in this document is shown in Table 3.
3. Conduct forage production inventories as funds become available in the Henrys Fork (Pastures E and F), Hanks, Sage, and Cottonwood Creek allotments.

TABLE 1

ALLOTMENTS AND ACREAGE BY MANAGEMENT CATEGORY

Maintain ("M")[2]		**Improve ("I")**[1]		**Custodial ("C")**[2]	
Allotment	**Acres**	**Allotment**	**Acres**	**Allotment**	**Acres**
Rock Springs[3]	955,529	Red Creek	69,038	Donohoo	992
(N of I-80)		Salt Wells	53,195	Poison Creek	724
Rock Springs	1,132,718	Pine Mountain	70,978	Hisey Hallow	918
(S of I-80)		Vermillion Creek	149,193	Cedar Point	1,440
Rife	44,705	Spring Creek	45,472	Peoples Canal	2,207
Alkali Creek	29,226	Mellor Mountain	70,313	Circle Bar	652
Larson	1,943	Circle Springs	22,301	Sage	2,410
Stag Hallow	1,889	Sugarloaf	91,985	**7 Allotments**	**9,343**
5 Allotments	**2,166,010**	Henrys Fork	339,388		
		Sage Creek	24,355		
		Hickey Mountain	8,407		
		Horseshoe Wash	7,663		
		Antelope Wash	8,136		
		Crooked Wash	11,143		
		Hanks	3,571		
		Cottonwood Creek	4,688		
		Bald Hills	5,517		
		Fourth of July[3]	21,586		
		18 Allotments	**1,006,929**		

[1] Allotments in the Improvement Category are ranked in a descending order of priority with respect to BLM funding of improvements.

[2] Allotments in Maintenance and Custodial categories are not ranked in any priority for funding of improvements.

[3] This area is contained within the boundary of the Big Sandy Resource Area; all others are contained in the Salt Wells Resource Area.

TABLE 2

RANGE DEVELOPMENTS UNDER PROPOSED ACTION

Allotment	Number of Water Developments			Acres of Vegetation Treatment			Other Projects	Initial Grazing Treatment Recommendation[2]
	Spring Developments	Reservoirs	Other	Chemical Treatment or Burn[1]	Chemical Treatment Only	Total		
Red Creek	2	8		829	1,007	1,836		Three-pasture rest-rotation.
Salt Wells	2	2		2,119	0	2,119	Salt Wells Creek Exclosure; Gap Creek Exclosure	Scheduled systematic rotation with one pasture rested yearlong.
Pine Mountain	1	4	4 miles pipeline	7,170	0	7,170	Upper Vermillion Creek Exclosure	Scheduled systematic rotation with one pasture rested yearlong.
Vermillion Creek	0	6		2,526	0	2,526		Open use during winter months; Defer late March-April spring use.
Spring Creek	3	3	5 miles pipeline	1,344	772	2,116		Three-pasture rotation during the growing season; independent winter months. months.
Mellor Mountain	1	1		3,203	48	3,251	Little Bitter Creek Exclosure	Scheduled system rotation for sheep and cattle; lamb in traditiona; areas.
Circle Springs	0	1		771	0	771		Utilize in conjunction with Mellor Mountain
Sugarloaf	1	2		4,565	269	4,834		Scheduled systematic rotation with one pasture rested during the growing season.
Henrys Fork	1	17		23,846	0	23,846	Henrys Fork Bottom Fence	Three two-pasture deffered systems specified in existing AMP as needed.
Sage Creek	0	2		80	0	80		Utilize in conjunction with Sugarloaf.

TABLE 2 (CONTINUED)

RANGE DEVELOPMENTS UNDER PROPOSED ACTION

	Number of Water Developments			Acres of Vegetation Treatment				
Allotment	Spring Developments	Reservoirs	Other	Chemical Treatment or Burn[1]	Chemical Treatment Only	Total	Other Projects	Initial Grazing Treatment Recommendation[2]
Hickey Mountain	0	3		512	0	512		Deferred rotation.
Horseshoe Wash	0	0		538	0	538		Deferred rotation.
Antelope Wash	0	3		0	0	0		Two-pasture deferred rotation in conjunction with Cottonwood Creek.
Crooked Wash	0	0		508	0	508		Deferred rotation.
Hanks	0	0		910	0	910		Deferred rotation.
Cottonwood Creek	0	2		594	0	594		Two-pasture deferred rotation in conjunction with Antelope Wash
Bald Hills	2	1		1,362	0	1,362		Deferred rotation.
Fourth of July	0	0		0	0	0		Deferred rotation in conjunction with Steamboat Mountain Allotment via existing AMP.
Totals	**13**	**55**		**50,877**	**2,096**	**52,973**		

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[1] Acreage is suitable for chemical treatment or prescribed burns.

[2] Grazing treatments are developed through the AMP process of consultation with affected livestock operators and other interested parties, such as the Wyoming Game and Fish Department. This cooperative development process is further along in some areas than others, resulting in more specific details for some allotments. Full-scale development initiatives are not scheduled until after completion of the EIS. The recommendations listed here must be considered a starting point for analysis and discussion, rather than a comprehensive proposal. Implementation of these systems would probably require pasture fencing. Given the assumption that Highways 191 and 430 will be fenced by the Wyoming Highway Department, up to 160 additional miles of fences may be necessary.

TABLE 3

EXISTING KIND OF LIVESTOCK, LIVESTOCK USE, AND SEASON OF LIVESTOCK USE

Allotment	Number	Active Preference in AUMs	Privately Controlled AUMs	Total AUMs	Kind of[1] Livestock	Season of Use
Improve Allotments						
Red Creek	4008	4,592	2,669	7,261	C	5-1 to 10-15
Salt Wells	4009	2,618	2,040	4,658	C & H	5-1 to 10-31
Pine Mountain	4007	8,600	1,996	10,566	C & S	5-1 to 1-31
Vermillion Creek	4003	12,903	2,157	15,060	C & S	yearlong
Spring Creek	4011	4,070	328	4,398	C	yearlong
Mellor Mountain	4027	6,101	3,061	9,162	C & S	4-16 to 12-15
Circle Springs	4001	946	1,460	2,406	C & S	5-1 to 12-15
Sugarloaf	4010	6,008	1,414	7,422	C	yearlong
Henrys Fork	4012	31,295	1,053	32,348	C, H & S	5-1 to 10-31 2 pastures winter use
Sage Creek	4000	1,117	1,228	2,345	C	yearlong
Hickey Mountain	4013	678	108	786	C	5-1 to 10-31
Horseshoe Wash	4006	607	0	607	C & S	12-1 to 3-31
Antelope Wash	4022	461	0	461	C	5-7 to 9-30
Crooked Wash	4005	2,292	0	2,292	S	12-1 to 4-15
Hanks	4018	593	10	603	C	5-1 to 9-30
Cottonwood	4025	436	0	436	C	10-20 to 12-24 5-9 to 10-15
Bald Hills	4015	925	0	925	C	5-1 to 10-31
Fourth of July	3016	836	1,047	1,883	C	5-1 to 12-31
Maintain Allotments						
Rock Springs	3018	107,227	105,879	213,106	C & S	yearlong
Rife	4002	1,661	1,786	3,447	S	5-1 to 10-31
Alkali Creek	4004	2,593	361	2,954	S	5-1 to 6-15 11-16 to 4-15
Larson	4014	112	112	224	C & S	6-10 to 10-31
Stag Hollow	4015	378	0	378	S	5-1 to 10-31
Custodial Allotments						
Donohoo	4016	176	0	176	C & S	6-15 to 9-30
Poison Creek	4017	134	0	134	C	5-15 to 7-15
Hisey Hollow	4020	71	0	71	C	5-16 to 8-31

TABLE 3 (CONTINUED)

EXISTING KIND OF LIVESTOCK, LIVESTOCK USE, AND SEASON OF LIVESTOCK USE

Allotment	Number	Active Preference in AUMs	Privately Controlled AUMs	Total AUMs	Kind of[1] Livestock	Season of Use
Cedar Point	4021	162	0	162	C	5-1 to 6-15
Peoples Canal	4026	50	0	50	C	5-1 to 7-15
Circle Bar	4023	120	0	120	C	9-1 to 9-30
Sage	4024	209	0	209	S	2-1 to 2-28 5-1 to 8-31
Total		197,971	126,679	324,650		

[1] C-Cattle, S-Sheep, H-Horses

4. Consolidate the Cottonwood Creek and Antelope Wash allotments. Consolidate the Crooked Wash Allotment with an adjacent area in the Rawlins District.
5. Manage the Fourth of July, Donohoo, and Henrys Fork allotments by the guidelines of existing AMPs.

Management of Maintain ("M") Category Allotments

Continue the existing satisfactory situation. Work with livestock operators to develop range improvements, and monitor to the degree necessary to detect significant environmental changes, as specified in Appendix C of the Draft EIS.

Management of Custodial ("C") Category Allotments

Continue the existing situation, authorize range improvements by private individuals, and monitor to a degree necessary to detect undesirable change.

Management Actions on all Allotments Regardless of Category

1. Utilize future increases in forage production as livestock forage until suspended preference AUMs are restored, then utilize any further increases in forage equitably among livestock and other uses.
2. Process requests for conversion of kind of livestock, e.g., sheep to cattle, following a study of environmental suitability.
3. Assign maintenance responsibility for range improvements by the provisions of the Rangeland Improvement Policy. The EIS area now contains 152 reservoirs, 162.5 miles of fence, 21 spring developments, 21.7 miles of pipeline, 18 troughs, and 14 cattleguards which will require maintenance. This is shown by allotment on page 22 of the Draft EIS.
4. Provide for wildlife habitat (Please see pages 17 and 18 of the Draft EIS, for the details).
5. Manage wild horses by the provisions of the existing Wild Horse Herd Management Plans (HMAPs).

   a. The two HMAPs in the Salt Wells Resource Area, entitled the Salt Wells HMAP and the Adobe Town HMAP, are designed to maintain an average of 365 and 235 head of horses respectively in the EIS area. The Adobe Town HMAP is managed in conjunction with the Rawlins District and has an overall herd level of 500 head.

   b. The two HMAPs in the Big Sandy Resource Area, entitled the Divide Basin and the White Mountain HMAPs, are designed to maintain an average of 150 and 100 head of horses respectively in the EIS area. Both Herd Management Areas extend out of the Salt Wells-Pilot Butte area into the northern portion of the Big Sandy Resource Area, and contain additional wild horse numbers. The figures shown refer only to that portion of the herd expected to occupy the checkerboard.
6. Inherent in the Proposed Action are the standard operating procedures with respect to billings, unauthorized use, and day-to-day administration specified in the 43 CFR regulations.

Alternatives Considered

Continuation of the Existing Situation (No Action)

Under this alternative, the present grazing program would remain intact for the purpose of analyzing the effects of grazing if no changes were initiated. Major components include:

—Continuation of existing AMPs.

—No development of new AMPs.

—No implementation of range projects; e.g., water developments or vegetation treatments.

—Maintenance of existing facilities under the guidelines of the Rangeland Improvement Policy.

—Management of an average of 850 wild horses under the provisions of existing wild horse herd management area plans.

—No dividing or combining of current allotments.

Emphasize Livestock Production

Under this alternative, management would favor livestock use within the area. This alternative differs from the proposed action in the following ways:

- —All future increases in forage would be licensed to livestock operators.
- —No riparian exclosures would be developed.
- —Eighteen allotments (1,006,929 acres) would be managed as improvement allotments; however, the alternative would entail:
  - —Implementing 83 water developments.
  - —Implementing vegetation treatment on 84,994 acres.
  - —Constructing 162 miles of fence.

Emphasize Watershed, Wildlife Habitat, and Soil Stability

Under this alternative, management would favor soil, water resources, and wildlife. This alternative differs from the proposed action in the following ways:

- —Future increases in forage would be utilized for watershed, wildlife, and soil stability. (See Volume 1 for further details.)
- —Conversion of kind of livestock would be restricted in 20 allotments.
- —Seven small riparian exclosures would be developed.
- —Eighteen allotments (1,006,929 acres) would be managed as improvement allotments; however, the alternative would entail:
  - —Implementing 32 water developments.
  - —Implementing prescribed burns on 38,843 acres.
  - —Constructing 160 miles of fence.
  - —Continuing or developing allotment management plans on all eighteen allotments. AMPs would be designed specifically for enhancement of soils, watershed, and wildlife resources.

License No Livestock Use on Public Lands

Under this alternative, the environment would be allowed to respond to its full potential with a minimum of livestock use. Major components include:

- —Allowing operators to run only the currently recognized stocking rate from their unfenced private lands over the entire allotment acreage, provided this land is currently being run in common with the public lands.
- —No development of AMPs; existing AMPs would be dropped.
- —Allowing conversions in kind of livestock following a favorable analysis of suitability.
- —Allowing wildlife to expand to the carrying capacity of their habitat.
- —Management of four wild horse herd management areas for a total of 850 head in the grazing management area.

ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

The Proposed Action is considered to be the Environmentally Preferred Alternative. Based on the information contained in the Draft EIS and summarized in Table 4 of this document, the District Manager has concluded this alternative is the most balanced multiple use management approach. Careful consideration was given to the Emphasize Watershed, Wildlife Habitat, and Soil Stability Alternative, in arriving at this conclusion. It was felt that the Proposed Action contained the key elements of the Watershed, Wildlife Habitat, and Soil Alternative needed to preserve environmental quality. Periodic rest of preferred grazing sites (especially riparian habitat) has been addressed in both these alternatives. The Proposed Action contains more projects (notably chemical treatment) which were eliminated from the Watershed, Wildlife Habitat, and Soil Alternative, but it felt that the mitigating measures specified will eliminate adverse effects of these projects. Furthermore, it is considered absolutely essential that land management proceed in harmony with both the BLM and the area's private landowners. The Proposed Action is best suited to incorporate this essential cooperative management.

TABLE 4

COMPARISION OF THE ALTERNATIVES INCLUDING THE PROPOSED ACTION

Item	Proposed Action	Continuation of the Existing Situation	Emphasize Livestock Production	Empahsize Watershed, Wildlife Habitat, and Soil Stability	License Number Use on Livestock Use on Public Lands
Forage Production on Public Lands For Livestock (AUMs)	+ 12,488	- 9,180	+ 16,577	- 151	- 197,971
Proposed Range Improvements					
Water Developments (Number)	70	0	83	32	0
Vegetation Treatments (Acres)	52,973	0	84,994	38,843	0
New Fencing (Miles)	160	0	162	160	0
Benefit/Cost Ratio	1.4	0.9	1.3	1.3	NA
Long-Term Effects					
Soil Erosion Rates	Reduction	Increase	Slight Increase	Reduction	Slight Reduction
Sediment Rates	20% Reduction	10% Increase	15% Reduction	30% Reduction	18% Reduction
Aquatic Habitat	Improvement Overall	Continued Degradation	Stable to Slight Decrease	Improvement Overall	Improvement in Localized Areas
Big Game Numbers					
Antelope	+ 409	- 259	- 233	+ 744	+ 15,967
Deer	+ 382	- 493	- 3	+ 571	+ 6,504
Elk	+ 41	- 67	- 4	+ 64	+ 1,109
Adverse Effects to Cultural Resources	Continued Moderate	Increased	Increased	Continued Moderate	Decreased
Recreation Resources Hunter Days	+ 389	- 475	- 66	+ 619	+ 9,705
Regional Income (in Dollars Per Annum Compared to Present)	+ 507,700	- 494,700	+ 563,700	+ 108,200	- 6,854,800
Employment Opportunities	+ 6	- 7	+ 6	+ 3	- 53

FINAL DECISIONS AND RATIONALE

Final Decisions

The Proposed Action is the alternative selected. This decision becomes effective upon publication of this document. The provisions contained in the proposed action, as specified in the Draft EIS, represent the final land use decisions with the following modifications:

1. The Crooked Wash and Horseshoe Wash Allotments have been changed to Maintain Category Allotments. This would result in a categorical arrangement of 16 "I" allotments containing 988,123 acres, 7 "M" allotments containing 2,184,816 acres, and 7 "C" allotments containing 9,343 acres. The range improvements shown in Table 2 for these allotments will be dropped from consideration until such time as the need for these projects becomes more apparent.
2. The allotment priority arrangement will change from the descending priority shown in Table 1 to the order displayed in Table 5 (District Manager's Final Rank).
3. The projects listed in Table 2 (e.g., number of water developments and acres of vegetation treatment) represent potentials rather than objectives. The Bureau expects that the consultation process will reduce the number of range improvements which will actually be implemented. This consultation process is continuing. Specific changes will be presented in the RPS updates which will be issued periodically.
4. Work with appropriate permittees in developing Cooperative Management Agreements on allotments where the program could be expected to be beneficial.

Rationale

Before making the final decisions for the range program, a final analysis of all pertinent information presented in the planning system and EIS was completed. This information was considered in light of the provisions of the rangeland management and rangeland improvement policy.

The Bureau of Land Management has currently begun to manage its range improvement funds in a more specific manner. One of the fundamental objectives of the national range policy is to concentrate funding for range improvements in individual or groups of high priority allotments, rather than "scattering" individual projects throughout a large area. Under this approach, criteria must be developed to establish priorities for management of grazing allotments. The criteria for the setting of priorities among allotments may be roughly divided into two groupings: 1) an evaluation of the benefit-cost analysis, and 2) an evaluation of the more intangible aspects of range management, such as soil conservation and wildlife habitat productivity.

The following is a brief description of each Improve ("I") category allotment, presented in descending order of priority for project funding. The intangible aspects are emphasized in the narrative, and the benefit-cost information is emphasized in Table 5. This benefit-cost information is based on the range improvement program described in the proposed action of the Draft EIS. Maintain ("M") and Custodial ("C") allotments are discussed in a more general manner following the analysis of the "I" allotments. No benefit-cost analysis was performed for "M" and "C" allotments, because range improvements have not been proposed. A benefit-cost analysis will be performed on individual projects by allotment prior to implementation.

Improve Allotments

Red Creek - The Red Creek Allotment contains an uncommon variety of resource values. The area is very scenic, and is easily viewed from Highway 191. The area is rich in wildlife and recreation values, containing large acreages of winter range for deer and elk, as well as a wilderness study area. The management keynote for the area is maintaining watershed stability. The area is naturally unstable, and erosion has been accelerated by improper road construction and poor livestock distribution. Since the allotment stradles the tristate corner of Utah, Colorado, and Wyoming, the management of the area is of interest to all three states, especially Utah, which is the ultimate recipient of the Red Creek sediment yield. This sediment, or reduction of sediment as a result of management actions, is difficult to account for in the benefit-cost analysis. The western portion of the allotment is being used as a utility corridor for major north/south pipelines. Since the livestock operator who controls the majority of the AUMs in the basin is supportive of the Bureau's livestock grazing management proposals, the opportunity for immediate cooperative action exists.

Salt Wells - The Salt Wells Allotment, like Red Creek, is largely a basin surrounded by higher terrain, and grazing animals exhibit a preference for the area. Deer, elk, antelope, wild horses, and unauthorized livestock from adjacent allotments are common in the area. While it ranks only eighth in the benefit-cost analysis, it is the opinion of the Salt Wells Resource Area range staff that this allotment has considerable potential for improved vegetation productivity. A management plan which would allow periodic rest and brush control, in conjunction with reduced wild horse use, would drastically improve overall resource conditions in the area. Strategic drift fences would prevent unauthorized use. Like most of the allotments in the vicinity, Salt Wells contains significant watershed values and problems. There is high potential for surface mining of coal in this allotment.

Pine Mountain - This allotment is one of the most significant watersheds in the area and contains the headwaters of 8 perennial creeks. Many of the creeks are presently headcutting. The area is rich in wildlife and contains few existing range improvements. Traffic counts in 1983 indicate that Pine Mountain is the #1 visitor use area in the Salt Wells Resource Area excluding Flaming Gorge Reservoir. The Bureau anticipates a request for conversion from sheep to cattle in the near future. This action could require improved management practices to prevent a rapid decline of range condition in riparian areas.

Vermillion Creek - Vermillion Creek is generally utilized as winter range by operators who run cattle in nearby higher country during the summer. Use in this area is closely tied to the Red Creek, Pine Mountain, Mellor Mountain, and Salt Wells Allotments. Overall, eight operators utilize the area. The boundary line between the Vermillion Creek Allotment and Alkali Creek (an M allotment in satisfactory condition) is superficially located. Livestock (sheep and cattle) from both allotments commonly drift or are herded into the wrong allotment. Recent objections to this practice have developed into a significant problem in recent years. Like Salt Wells, there is high potential for surface mining of coal in this allotment.

Mellor Mountain - Mellor Mountain is very large and diverse. It is located at the top of a major watershed, and it's wildlife habitat values are high. No range improvements have been implemented by the BLM in the past, and there is much potential for improvement. Two operators use the area. The majority of the AUMs are controlled by an operator who utilizes this allotment in conjunction with the Circle Springs Allotment. These two allotments are inseparable with respect to any management plans.

Circle Springs - Circle Springs is a private (all the AUM's are controlled by a single operator) "checkerboard" allotment, used in conjunction with Mellor Mountain. The allotment is characterized by numerous canyons which cut into the southwest portion of Aspen Mountain, and contains two perennial creeks. Livestock use is typically heavy in the bottoms and light on the surrounding slopes.

Henrys Fork - Of the three allotments in the Salt Wells-Pilot Butte area currently managed under an existing AMP, the Henrys Fork is the largest and most significant in terms of size and overall importance. Approximately half the livestock operators in the Salt Wells Resource Area have some use in the allotment. Most of the existing range improvements in the Resource Area are located in this allotment. The main reason the benefit-cost ratio in this allotment is so high is that fences needed for rest following brush control are already in place; this drasticially reduces project costs. All known previous brush control projects in the Resource Area have occurred in this allotment.

Hanks - Hanks is small and fairly homogenous. The watershed values are not high, and only moderate wildlife habitat values exist. The allotment is fenced, and few range improvement projects are needed, although the potential for increasing overall forage productivity through brush control is high.

Spring Creek - This allotment is very diverse with respect to topography. Large numbers of deer, elk, and antelope frequent the area, especially in winter and early spring. The area is easily viewed by the public since it is bisected by Highway 191. Most of the AUMs in the allotment are controlled by an operator who is supportive of the Bureau's grazing management proposals. Immediate action in this allotment is hampered by the right-of-way fencing situation on Highway 191. It is currently not known if or when the highway will be fenced. The fencing of this highway would constitute a major change in the existing situation. It is difficult to develop long term management plans for the allotment while this fence remains a variable.

Sugarloaf - This allotment is rich in wildlife, recreation potential, and watershed values. This is one of the more diverse allotments in the resource area, ranging from subalpine fir to salt brush flats. Few range projects exist in the allotment. This allotment is used in conjunction with Sage Creek. Periodic rest of preferred grazing locations would improve overall forage productivity of the allotment.

Sage Creek - This allotment contains some of the roughest topography in the area, resulting in the unsatisfactory utilization pattern of heavy use in canyon bottoms and seldom used slopes. It has the highest relative percentage of unsuitable range. Severe watershed problems exist. This allotment is a private checkerboard allotment run in conjunction with Sugarloaf.

Bald Hills - Bald Hills is small and fairly homogenous. The watershed values are not high, and it has only moderate value as wildlife habitat. It is already fenced, and little is needed in the way of range improvements. The potential for improvement is small. In 1977, 531 active AUMs were transferred into the allotment from the Henrys Fork Allotment. It is considered possible that an over obligation of the forage exists, although it was not yet evident in 1979 when range condition data was collected.

Hickey Mountain - Hickey Mountain is small but very diverse. It's watershed value is high, and acre per acre it is possibly the best summer wildlife habitat in the EIS area. It is already fenced and little is needed in the way of range improvements. The potential for improvement is small.

Cottonwood - Cottonwood is a small allotment adjacent to Antelope Wash. Both of these allotments are fenced and used by the same operator. With the existing fences, an AMP can be implemented for virtually no cost. As a result, some of the projected forage increases may be realized with very little expense.

Antelope Wash - Antelope Wash is a small allotment adjacent to Cottonwood. See Cottonwood for further explanation.

4th of July - This allotment is managed under an AMP with the Steamboat Mountain Allotment and already contains all necessary range improvements. It is thought that the recently initiated management plan will yield positive results in the future.

Maintain Allotments

Rock Springs - The Rock Springs Allotment contains over 2 million acres of checkerboard ownership lands. It is currently managed satisfactorily, primarily due to the Rock Springs Grazing Association, the major operator. Most of the area is currently in high fair to good condition. Since the primary use is by sheep during the winter months, brush control, rotation grazing, and water development would seem largely inappropriate. However, this allotment must be considered top priority for spot range improvements, due to its sheer size and the variety of ranch operations which use the area.

Alkali Creek - As noted in the Vermillion Creek Allotment discussion, these two allotments have an arbitrary allotment boundary line which is causing problems. However, this allotment appears to have a high range condition and few resource conflicts. The problems here should be dealt with through improved management actions associated with the Vermillion Creek Allotment.

Rife - Rife is a checkerboard allotment, with sheep use in the summer. Current management appears acceptable since no significant resource conflicts exist.

Stag Hollow - This allotment is currently in an acceptable condition, possibly because it has been consistently understocked, compared with total active preference, in recent years. Current management presents no serious resource conflicts.

Larson - No resource problems exist with the current livestock management in this allotment.

Horseshoe Wash - The analysis of this allotment during the EIS process indicates this allotment is more appropriately placed in the "M" category. No serious resource conflicts are apparent, and the benefit cost analysis showed disproportionate costs in relation to the anticipated resource gains, given implementation of the projects shown in the description of the Proposed Action.

Crooked Wash - Crooked Wash, like Horseshoe Wash, is also more appropriately placed in the "M" category. No serious resource problems exist and the benefit cost analysis indicates that funds could be used to better advantage in other allotments.

Custodial Allotments

The custodial allotments, which are Donohoo, Poison Creek, Hisey Hollow, Cedar Point, Peoples Canal, Circle Bar, and Sage, are all of limited significance to the federal land management of the area. It would be difficult to align these allotments in a particular order of priority. The Bureau proposes to leave these allotments as is, monitor for serious land management problems, and handle problems on an as-needed basis.

Mitigation

By design, the grazing program defined in the Proposed Action, as amended, will mitigate adverse affects of livestock grazing. For example, the rotation grazing systems will aid in the development of healthy plan communities by allowing periodic rest of preferred grazing sites. This in turn would allow the plants to transfer photosynthetic nutrients to root systems, resulting in healthy plant communities capable of withstanding periods of heavy use. Vegetation treatments would mitigate the trend of grass to shrub dominance, which is common in areas with significant grazing pressure from cattle during the summer. However, the range improvements themselves must be developed in a manner which will maximize desired environmental response, and conversely minimize adverse effects. The following measures will assist in achieving the desired results:

1. Close consultation with local operators and the Wyoming Game and Fish Department could greatly assist in correctly locating water developments, fences, and other range projects in the most environmentally suitable locations possible. BLM would attempt to utilize all available expertise to assist in the development of allotment management plans.
2. Top rails, lay down panels, or antelope passes may be required in localized areas, if a significant problem concerning wildlife mobility is identified.
3. Fences should be designed so that wild horses in fenced areas would be able to join other wild horses in numbers sufficient to maintain a viable herd. This would be accomplished by the use of gates, laydown panels, or strategic fence location.
4. If maintenance agreements can be arranged, the proposed spring developments and portions of the proposed reservoirs would be fenced in an effort to develop riparian habitat.
5. To improve livestock distribution, livestock operators should locate salt away from known preferred grazing sites, especially riparian areas.
6. To avoid excessive trampling, salt would not be placed within a quartermile of known archeological or historic sites of National Register significance, major paleontological sites, or historic trails.
7. Loamy and sandy sites have been identified for vegetation manipulation, but small pockets of other sites occur in almost any area of significant size. There should be less than 20% inclusions of non target sites in any area planned for manipulation.
8. Any use of herbicides must be preceded by a thorough review of the specific area to be sprayed and an evaluation of the effects of the spray on the wildlife species present. More guidelines concerning mitigation of herbicides application are found on pages 13 and 14 of the Salt Wells-Pilot Butte Grazing EIS.
9. No trailing permits would be allowed that would cross known archeological, historic, or paleontological sites or along historic trails.
10. If livestock appear to be interfering with forest regeneration following a clearcut, a temporary drift fence would be needed to prevent livestock use of these areas.

TABLE 5

ENVIRONMENTAL AND ECONOMIC CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN ESTABLISHING ALLOTMENT PRIORITY RANKING[1]

Part A

	ALLOTMENT NAME			
Item	Red Creek	Salt Wells	Pine Mountain	Vermillion Creek
Environmental Criteria				
1. Management Category	I	I	I	I
2. Critical Resource Values	E	H	H	M
3. Use Conflicts	E	H	H	M
4. Percent of Allotment in Unsatisfactory Condition	1	3	6	4
5. Public Controversy	H	H	H	L
6. State/Local Government & Other Organization Goals	H	H	H	M
Economic Criteria				
7. Initial Cost (Total) of Range Improvements ($$)	92,921	71,976	110,430	108,564
8. Increase in Livestock Stocking Rate (AUMs at year 30)	865	683	1,729	1,124
9. Total Discounted Costs Over 50 Years ($$)	129,623	101,460	161,117	156,100
10. Total AUMs Gained Through Monitary Expenditure Over 50 Years	76,429	80,064	70,505	156,405
11. Total Discounted Cost Per Additional AUM	1.7	1.28	2.29	1.00
12. Benefit-Cost Ratio	1.13:1	1.26:1	1.28:1	1.39:1
Ranking Priority Sequence				
13. Initial Rank	1	2	3	4
14. Benefit-Cost Rank	11	8	7	5
15. Area Manager Rank	1	2	3	4
16. Advisory Board Rank	The Area Manager's Rank was concurred with at the Grazing Advisory Board Meeting of 8-25-83.			
17. District Manager Final Rank	Concur with Area Manager and Advisory Board.			

TABLE 5 (CONTINUED)

ENVIRONMENTAL AND ECONOMIC CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN ESTABLISHING ALLOTMENT PRIORITY RANKING[1]

Part B

Item	ALLOTMENT NAME Mellor Mountain	 Circle Springs	 Henrys Fork	 Hanks	 Spring Creek
Environmental Criteria					
1. Management Category	I	I	I	I	I
2. Critical Resource Values	H	M	H	M	H
3. Use Conflicts	H	M	H	M	H
4. Percent of Allotment in Unsatisfactory Condition	4	4	9	0	1
5. Public Controversy	M	M	M	L	H
6. State/Local Government & Other Organization Goals	M	M	H	L	H
Economic Criteria					
7. Initial Cost (Total) of Range Improvements ($$)	79,532	67,584	154,896	7,390	79,456
8. Increase in Livestock Stocking Rate (AUMs at year 30)	1,800	383	3,514	156	205
9. Total Discounted Costs Over 50 Years ($$)	62,033	92,346	646,952	13,003	130,906
10. Total AUMs Gained Through Monitary Expenditure Over 50 Years	75,671	26,021	1,068,092	9,669	43,854
11. Total Discounted Cost Per Additional AUM	.82	3.52	.61	1.34	2.99
12. Benefit-Cost Ratio	2.08:1	.39:1	2.19:1	1.59:1	.68:1
Ranking Priority Sequence					
13. Initial Rank	6	7	9	15	5
14. Benefit-Cost Rank	2	16	1	3	14
15. Area Manager Rank	5	6	7	8	9
16. Advisory Board Rank	The Area Manager's Rank was concurred with at the Grazing Advisory Board Meeting of 8-25-83.				
17. District Manager Final Rank	Concur with the Area Manager and Advisory Board				

TABLE 5 (CONTINUED)

ENVIRONMENTAL AND ECONOMIC CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN ESTABLISHING ALLOTMENT PRIORITY RANKING[1]

Part C

	ALLOTMENT NAME			
Item	**Sugarloaf**	**Sage Creek**	**Bald Hills**	**Hickey Mountain**
Environmental Criteria				
1. Management Category	I	I	I	I
2. Critical Resource Values	H	H	M	H
3. Use Conflicts	H	H	M	H
4. Percent of Allotment in Unsatisfactory Condition	5	6	0	0
5. Public Controversy	H	M	L	M
6. State/Local Government & Other Organization Goals	H	H	L	M
Economic Criteria				
7. Initial Cost (Total) of Range Improvements ($$)	125,795	17,320	22,448	13,173
8. Increase in Livestock Stocking Rate (AUMs at year 30)	1,418	30	217	88
9. Total Discounted Costs Over 50 Years ($$)	175,473	32,570	37,114	25,895
10. Total AUMs Gained Through Monitary Expenditure Over 50 Years	106,767	23,875	25,553	12,210
11. Total Discounted Cost Per Additional AUM	1.64	1.36	1.45	2.12
12. Benefit-Cost Ratio	1.3:1	1.12:1	1.15:1	.92:1
Ranking Priority Sequence				
13. Initial Rank	8	10	17	11
14. Benefit-Cost Rank	6	9	10	12
15. Area Manager Rank	10	11	12	13
16. Advisory Board Rank	The Area Manager's Rank was concurred with at the Grazing Advisory Board Meeting of 8-25-83.			
17. District Manager Final Rank	Concur with Area Manager and Advisory Board.			

TABLE 5 (CONTINUED)

ENVIRONMENTAL AND ECONOMIC CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN ESTABLISHING ALLOTMENT PRIORITY RANKING[1]

Part D

Item	ALLOTMENT NAME		
	Cottonwood Creek	Antelope Wash	Horseshoe Wash
Environmental Criteria			
1. Management Category	I	I	I
2. Critical Resource Values	M	M	M
3. Use Conflicts	M	M	M
4. Percent of Allotment in Unsatisfactory Condition	17	12	5
5. Public Controversy	L	L	L
6. State/Local Government & Other Organization Goals	L	L	M
Economic Criteria			
7. Initial Cost (Total) of Range Improvements ($$)	9,376	10,500	32,812
8. Increase in Livestock Stocking Rate (AUMs at year 30)	26	44	71
9. Total Discounted Costs Over 50 Years ($$)	17,710	56,471	43,621
10. Total AUMs Gained Through Monitary Expenditure Over 50 Years	6,405	25,497	3,291
11. Total Discounted Cost Per Additional AUM	2.77	2.21	13.25
12. Benefit-Cost Ratio	.69:1	61:1	24:1
Ranking Priority Sequence			
13. Initial Rank	16	13	12
14. Benefit-Cost Rank	13	15	17
15. Area Manager Rank	14	15	NR[2]
16. Advisory Board Rank	The Area Manager's Rank was concurred with at the Grazing Advisory Board Meeting of 8-25-83.		
17. District Manager Final Rank	Concur with Area Manager and Advisory Board.		

TABLE 5 (CONTINUED)

ENVIRONMENTAL AND ECONOMIC CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN ESTABLISHING ALLOTMENT PRIORITY RANKING[1]

Part E

Item	ALLOTMENT NAME Crooked Wash	Fourth of July
Environmental Criteria		
1. Management Category	I	I
2. Critical Resource Values	M	M
3. Use Conflicts	M	M
4. Percent of Allotment in Unsatisfactory Condition	5	1
5. Public Controversy	L	L
6. State/Local Government & Other Organization Goals	L	L
Economic Criteria		
7. Initial Cost (Total) of Range Improvements ($$)	34,812	0
8. Increase in Livestock Stocking Rate (AUMs at year 30)	86	49
9. Total Discounted Costs Over 50 Years ($$)	46,219	13,115
10. Total AUMs Gained Through Monitary Expenditure Over 50 Years	3,473	18,037
11. Total Discounted Cost Per Additional AUM	13.30	.72
12. Benefit-Cost Ratio	.21:1	1.55:1
Ranking Priority Sequence		
13. Initial Rank	14	18
14. Benefit-Cost Rank	18	4
15. Area Manager Rank	NR[2]	16
16. Advisory Board Rank	The Area Manager's Rank was Concurred with at the Grazing Advisory Board Meeting of 8/2⅝3.	
17. District Manager Final Rank	Concur with Area Manager and Advisory Board.	

TABLE 5 (CONTINUED)

ENVIRONMENTAL AND ECONOMIC CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN ESTABLISHING ALLOTMENT PRIORITY RANKING[1]

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[1] Analysis Criteria for Ranking and Scheduling Rangeland Improvements

1. **Management Category**—Selective management category, i.e. Maintain, Improve, or Custodial (M, I, or C). In the Salt Wells-Pilot Butte EIS area, only "I" category allotments were analyzed by the process shown in Table 5.
2. **Critical Resource Values**—Extent to which a critical resource value(s) exists and requires protection (E-Extreme, H-High, M-Medium, L-Low). Presence of threatened or endangered species, deteriorating riparian areas, fragile soils and/or severe erosion, public safety, and health hazards are some examples of critical resource values.
3. **Use Conflicts**—Existence of severe and/or controversial resource use conflicts (E-Extreme, H-High, M-Medium, L-Low).
4. **Percent of Allotment in Unsatisfactory Range Condition**—The figures in this column represent the percentage of range rated poor condition, as identified in the 1979-80 range survey.
5. **Public Controversy**—Public controversy generated by the proposal to install improvements (E-Extreme, H-High, M-Medium, L-Low).
6. **State/Local Govt. & Other Organiztion Goals**—Importance of improvements in achieving State/local government or other agency coordination goals (E-Extreme, H-High, M-Medium, L-Low).
7. **Initial Cost of Range Improvements**—Estimated total cost of improvements (in dollars) for all projects identified in the proposed action of the Salt Wells-Pilot Butte Grazing EIS.
8. **Increase in Livestock Stocking Rate**—The projected number of livestock AUMs added annually, on a sustained yield basis, to the existing stocking rate, at a point 30 years following implementation of the proposed action. This is the figure shown in Table 2-13 of the Salt Wells-Pilot Butte Grazing EIS.
9. **Total Discounted Costs Over 50 Years**—The total discounted cost of new range improvements and maintenance (reconstruction), for existing and proposed projects in the proposed action of the Salt Wells-Pilot Butte Grazing EIS.
10. **Total AUMs Gained Over 50 Years**—The cumulative number of AUMs which would be added (or prevented from being lost) through monetary expenditures on new range improvements and maintenance, given the implementation of the proposed action, over a 50 year period.
11. **Total Discounted Cost Per Additional AUM**—The total discounted cost of generating an additional AUM, based on the figures in items 10 and 11, over a fifty year period.
12. **Benefit-Cost Ratio**—Estimated benefit-cost ratio of the improvement package for the allotment utilizing the Wyoming Benefit Cost Computer Model.
13. **Initial Rank**—The initial priority ranking of allotments based on the resource area range staff's perception (prior to the analysis of the EIS).
14. **Benefit-Cost Rank**—The rank of each allotment given the benefit-cost analysis as the only criteria used in assigning a rank.
15. **Area Manager's Rank**—Area Manager's ranking based on assessment of Bureauwide and local criteria.
16. **Advisory Board Rank**—Ranking recommended by District Grazing Advisory Board.
17. **District Manager's Rank**—Final ranking assigned by District Manager.

[2] Not Ranked; Change to "M" Category.

IMPLEMENTATION

This document contains no rigid time table for development of Allotment Management Plans and their associated range improvements. The intention is to develop AMPs as rapidly as manpower and funding will permit, begining with the top priority allotment, and then following the descending order shown on Table 5. Specific problems in a given allotment, such as an inability of the BLM and the permittee or other interest group to arrive at an acceptable approach through consultation, may require initial bypassing of that allotment in order that progress in the EIS area on the whole may continue. It is anticipated that one to three AMPs per year will be developed. An AMP in Red Creek (the number 1 priority allotment) is currently in the final stages of consultation and review.

Consultation is ongoing with permittees in the high priority allotments. Once a viable AMP agreement is reached between the BLM and the effected livestock operators, the plan will be presented (prior to implementation) to other interested parties such as the Wyoming Department of Game and Fish.

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